

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E. O. 11652:NA
TAGS: SOPN, PINT, IT, UK, US
SUBJECT: BRITISH PRESS REACTION TO USG STATEMENT ON
ITALY

REF: STATE 8052

1. REACTIONS OF THE QUALITY BRITISH PRESS TO THE DEPARTMENT'S RECENT STATEMENT ON ITALY HAVE GENERALLY REFLECTED THE BASIC POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE PAPERS CONCERNED.
 2. THE CONSERVATIVE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" NOTED THAT THERE EXISTS A COMMON TENDENCY AMONG WESTERN EUROPEAN POLITICIANS TO BRAND AS "INTERFERENCE" ANY AMERICAN COMMENT ON THEIR AFFAIRS AND ASCRIBED THIS TYPE OF REACTION TO AN ATTEMPT TO SEEK VOTES FROM AN ELECTORATE
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SUPPOSEDLY STILL CLINGING TO RESIDUAL ANTI-AMERICANISM LEFT BEHIND BY WORLD WAR II AND THE POST-WAR PERIOD. THE "TELEGRAPH" ARGUED, HOWEVER, THAT "A WEST EUROPEAN POLITICIAN WHO HAD THE COURAGE TO WELCOME AMERICA'S CONTINUING INTEREST IN EUROPE'S SECURITY AND POLITICAL HEALTH - INSTEAD OF DECRYING IT - MIGHT BE SURPRISED BY THE RESPONSE."

3. IN ANOTHER ISSUE, THE "TELEGRAPH" SAID, "AMERICA'S DEVASTATING WARNING AGAINST THE INSIDIOUS DANGERS OF EURO-COMMUNISM, UNLOOSED AT THE HEIGHT OF ITALY'S GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS IS LIKE A GALE OF CLEAN FRESH AIR IN A MIASMA OF EQUIVOCATION, SELF-DECEPTION AND TIMIDITY THE "TELEGRAPH" BLUNTLY SAID, "THE LOUDER THE COMMUNISTS SCREAM 'FOUL' AND INTERFERENCE,' THE MORE IT SHOWS THEY ARE HURT."

4. TAKING THE OPPOSITE VIEW, THE LEFT-OF-CENTER "GUARDIAN" SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT "IS DISHONEST AND DEFIES BOTH LOGIC AND THE IMPERATIVES OF POLITICAL REALITY." THE "GUARDIAN'S" EDITORIALIST CLAIMED THAT IN THE ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTION OF 1976, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT A MAJORITY OF MEN OF MILITARY AGE VOTED COMMUNIST; SINCE ITALY'S CONSCRIPT ARMY CONSISTS OF ALMOST ALL ITALIAN MALES OF MILITARY AGE, BERLINGUER COULD HAVE SEIZED POWER TWO YEARS AGO WERE HE "THE SAME SORT OF MAN AS CHILE'S PINOCHET." MOVING FROM "LOGIC" TO REALITIES," THE GUARDIAN SAID "WHEN THE AMERICANS SAY - AS THEY DO IN PRIVATE - THAT COMMUNISTS IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD MEAN COMMUNISTS IN A NATO GOVERNMENT AND THAT THIS IS INTOLERABLE THEY FORGET, IGNORE, OR CONSIGN TO THE MEMORY HOLE THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN PRECEDENTS. ICELAND, WHICH BELONGS TO NATO AND CONTAINS ONE OF NATO'S MOST IMPORTANT BASES, HAS HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELECTED COMMUNIST MINISTERS; BUT NOTHING AWFUL HAPPENED EITHER TO THE KEFLAVIK AIR BASE OR TO THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE. OF COURSE THERE ARE GOOD GROUNDS FOR WATCHFULNESS AND SOME FOR FEAR IN MODERN ITALY. BUT MR. CARTER UNERRINGLY - AND DISMAYINGLY - MENTIONS NONE OF THEM."

5. A MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD LINE WAS TAKEN BY THE "OBSERVER, WHICH CLAIMED THAT WHILE EUROPE - EAST AND WEST - HAS TO BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE AND EVOLVE, THE BASIC CONCERNS OF BOTH THE USSR AND THE US TO MAINTAIN A POLITICAL AND MILITARY BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE "HAS KEPT WAR OUT OF A CONTINENT WHERE THE TWO BLOODIEST WARS IN HISTORY HAVE BEEN FOUGHT . . . NO ONE HAS YET DEVISED A SURER WAY THAN THE PRESENT POWER BALANCE TO KEEP THE CONTINENT AT PEACE."

BREWSTER

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